

## Message Text

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PAGE 01 PEKING 02599 200433Z  
ACTION EA-09

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FM USLO PEKING  
TO SECSTATE WASHDC 6954

C O N F I D E N T I A L PEKING 02599

E.O.11652: GDS  
TAGS: SWEL, CH  
SUBJECT: EARTHQUAKE PREDICTIONS

REF: PEKING 2535

1. AMBASSADOR MENZIES OF CANADA HAS PASSED TO USLO  
THE FOLLOWING MESSAGE SENT TO OTTAWA ON HIS DEC 14  
CONVERSATION WITH HSU YU-PEI, VICE CHAIRMAN OF THE  
PEKING REVOLUTIONARY COMMITTEE, ON THE EARTHQUAKE  
SITUATION IN PEKING.

2. BEGIN TEXT

DURING VISIT TO HSU YU-PEI, VICE CHAIRMAN OF REVOLUTIONARY  
COMMITTEE OF MUNICIPALITY OF PEKING, DEC 14 I DISCUSSED  
WITH HIM CURRENT EARTHQUAKE ALERT SITUATION IN PEKING.  
MUNICIPAL ADMINISTRATION COVERS CAPITAL AND NINE SURROUNDING  
COUNTIES EMBRACING 16,000 SQ KMS AND EIGHT MILLION PEOPLE. IT  
IS RESPONSIBLE FOR WARNING CITIZENS AND ISSUING NECESSARY  
INSTRUCTIONS SO I RECEIVED USEFUL AND CAREFUL REPLIES TO MY  
QUESTIONS.

3. HSU DESCRIBED CURRENT SITUATION AS FOLLOWS:  
SEISMOLOGISTS BELIEVE THAT AREA TO EAST SOUTHEAST OF  
PEKING CONTINUES TO BE IN AN ACTIVE SEISMIC PHASE.  
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AFTERSHOCKS ARE EXPECTED IN TANGSHAN AND ITS ENVIRONS  
WITH DIMINISHING INTENSITY BUT NO/NO MORE MAJOR QUAKE.  
THERE IS ALSO SLIGHT POSSIBILITY OF QUAKE OF  
MEDIUM INTENSITY IN PING GU COUNTY, 100 KMS SOUTHEAST  
OF PEKING. THIS IS NEAREST EPICENTRES OF SHOCKS  
ARE EXPECTED TO BE TO CAPITAL. HOWEVER HE WARNED

SEISMIC SCIENCE IS STILL AN IMPRECISE ONE AND SEISMOLOGISTS DO NOT/HAVE ALL ANSWERS. THUS WHILE PEKING MUNICIPALITY WAS ABLE TO REASSURE DIPLOMATS ABOUT GENERAL SITUATION IT WAS NECESSARY ALSO IN GENERAL WAY TO BE PREPARED. THEREFORE THERE WAS GENERAL WARNING TO ALL CITIZENS TO BE READY IN CASE OF QUAKE. THIS WARNING WOULD PROBABLY BE IN EFFECT THROUGH WINTER AND SPRING.

4. CERTAINLY ACTIVITIES OF MINISTRIES BUILDING LIGHT PREFABS IN THEIR COMPOUNDS AND OF CITIZENS IN BUILDING THEMSELVES SMALL SHELTERS ON SIDES OF STREETS CONTINUES ALTHOUGH BY NO/NO MEANS ALL SHELTERS ARE OCCUPIED AT NIGHT. THOSE THAT ARE ARE PEOPLE FROM HIGHER FLOORS OR QUITE SIMPLY VOLUNTEER INHABITANTS EASING PRESSURE OF CROWDED APARTMENTS. HSU SAID THAT FOUR AND FIVE STORY APARTMENT BLOCKS BUILT FOR CITIZENS OF PEKING WERE NOT/NOT OF AS SOLID CONSTRUCTION AS DIPLOMATIC APARTMENT BLDGS WHICH HAD BEEN CONSTRUCTED WITH ALL NECESSARY SAFETY FEATURES IN MIND. I COULD THEREFORE REST ASSURED THAT MY 9TH FLOOR APARTMENT WAS SAFE, AS HAD BEEN SHOWN DURING JULY EARTHQUAKE. HSU SAID THAT IF MORE PRECISE INFO BECAME AVAILABLE IT WOULD BE PASSED ON TO DIPLOMATIC MISSIONS.

5. I FOUND EXPLANATIONS GIVEN BY HSU REASONABLE BUT EXTENDED WARNING PERIOD PROLONGS DILEMMA OF APPROPRIATE POSTURE TO BE ADOPTED BY DIPLOMATIC MISSIONS. MOST NOW ARE PREPARED TO COPE WITH ANY POST-QUAKE EMERGENCY THROUGH STOCK PILING EMERGENCY  
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SUPPLIES AND ADVISING STAFF TO KEEP A SUITCASE PACKED. HOWEVER AFTER UP TO TWO WEEKS OF SLEEPING IN LOWER LEVEL APARTMENTS OF COLLEAGUES MOST STAFF MEMBERS HAVE DECIDED THAT PROLONGED DISRUPTION OF NORMAL LIVING ROUTINES CANNOT BE SUSTAINED AND HAVE RETURNED TO SLEEPING IN HIGHER LEVEL APARTMENTS.

6. WE WOULD BE INTERESTED TO KNOW WHETHER CDN SEISMOLOGISTS HAVE HAD ANY EXCHANGES WITH COLLEAGUES FROM CHINA OR ELSEWHERE ON CHINESE SITUATION AND ANY OBSERVATIONS THAT THEY MIGHT BE PREPARED TO MAKE CONCERNING EXTENDED CHINESE WARNING.  
END TEXT.

7. IN VIEW OF HSU'S POSITION AND THE DETAIL IN WHICH HE DISCUSSED THE PROBLEM, HE SEEMS TO BE AN AUTHORITATIVE SOURCE OF INFORMATION ON EARTHQUAKE

PREPAREDNESS IN PEKING. THIS INFORMATION FROM HSU  
IS REASSURING, BUT WE INTEND TO CONTINUE OUR  
PREPARATIONS FOR AN EMERGENCY. WE WOULD APPRECIATE  
AN ANSWER TO QUESTIONS RAISED REFTEL.  
GATES

NOTE BY OC/T: DISSEMINATION COORDINATED WITH S/S-O, MR. STEINER.

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NNN

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